

Chairman John Eklund
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Eklund:

My name is Antonio F. Stitt. I have over 25 years in Law Enforcement; serving as a Patrolman, Lieutenant, Executive Lieutenant and promoted to Chief of Police in 2007. I am a Certified OPOTA Instructor and State Certified Driver Education Instructor. I am a graduate of the Police Executive Leadership College, the FBI's Great Lakes Leadership Seminar and a host of executive leadership training programs. I am currently an instructor for Public Safety Driving School and Bryant & Stratton Security Academy.

One of my responsibilities as Police Chief is to consistently communicate with my community. I often host panel discussions with residents and patrons of our community, to hear and address concerns, share information and collectively come up with ideas to better serve the community. One of the most prevalent questions I am asked is "how do I keep my child from having a bad encounter with a law enforcement officer on a traffic stop." When my partner and I begin putting together the curriculum for our police-led driving school, we decided to incorporate an additional module on what to do if or when stopped by a law enforcement officer. How to proceed when a law enforcement officer approaches your vehicle, makes a request or gives instructions. Also, how to proceed when an overly aggressive law enforcement officer approaches your vehicle, makes a request and/or gives instructions.

Since implementing this training model, we immediately noticed a great number of our students were saying and doing things during the mock traffic stop that would be red flags or potential danger alerts for law enforcement officers. What was interesting is the fact that these students didn't think there was anything wrong with their behavior. Their actions were not malicious, but more from ignorance of simply not knowing the "Ques" that typically alert law enforcement officers of potential danger.

After participating in our traffic stop training model, students shared that they really did not know how serious a traffic stop could be if they did not comply with all lawful orders. Presently, we have quite a few parents, who initially contacted us to enroll their child into our driving

school, but after hearing about the traffic stop training model, inquired about taking the training themselves.

With all the tragic incidents throughout the United States involving police and civilians on traffic stops, I believe the traffic stop training model is needed throughout our country. We are living in a different time, a different generation. Today, it's acceptable to question authority, or to expect to be told why you're being asked to perform a task. There is a time and place to ask questions, and/or be told why you're being asked to perform a task. Unfortunately, a traffic stop is not that time, nor is it the place. Complete and total "Compliance" greatly decreases the probability of having a negative encounter on a traffic stop. Our traffic stop training model educates students on how to navigate and conduct themselves. Even if, or when, the law enforcement officers' conduct is unprofessional, our training gives the student clear and concise instruction on how to navigate the situation at hand, as well as how to proceed in reporting that officer's unprofessional behavior. We, Public Safety Driving School, totally support the "Bill" to have traffic stop training as a requirement in all driving schools.

Sincerely,

Antonio F. Stitt,
Public Safety Driving School